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POEMS, LYRIC AND IDYLLIC.

PRICE, 75 CTS.

ALICE OF MONMOUTH

AN

IDYL OF THE GREAT WAR

WITH

OTHER POEMS

BY

EDMUND C. STEDMAN

NEW YORK
CARLETON, PUBLISHER, 413 BROADWAY
LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, SON AND COMPANY
M.DCCCLXIV

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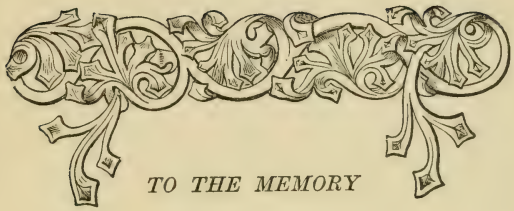

TO THE MEMORY

OF

C. F. S.

DIED: MAY 13, 1863.

It was not given thee, who wast so brave,
On the proud field to fill the patriot's grave;
'Twas not thy lot, tho' graced with culture rare,
To dwell 'mid things congenial and fair;
Nor found thy gentle soul a destined mate,
To share and soften such an adverse fate:
Ah! sweeter, since they came so late, should prove
Thy now serener glory — beauty — love.

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I.

ALICE OF MONMOUTH.

ALICE OF MONMOUTH.

I.

1.

HENDRICK VAN GHELT of Monmouth shore,
His fame still rings the county o'er!
The stock that he raised, the stallion he rode,
The fertile acres his farmers sow'd;
The dinners he gave; the yacht which lay
At his fishing-dock in the Lower Bay;
The suits which he waged, thro' many a year,
For a rood of land behind his pier;
Of these the chronicles yet remain
From Navesink Heights to Freehold Plain.

2.

The Shrewsbury people in autumn help
Their sandy toplands with marl and kelp,
And their peach and apple orchards fill

The gurgling vats of the cross-road mill.
They tell, as each twirls his tavern-can,
Wonderful tales of that staunch old man,
And they boast, of the draught they have tasted and smelt,
"'Tis good as the still of Hendrick Van Ghelt!"

3.

Were he alive, and at his prime,
In this — our boisterous modern time,
He would surely be, as he could not then,
A stalwart leader of mounted men:
A ranger, shouting his battle-cry,
Who knew how to fight and dared to die;
And the fame, which a county's limit spann'd,
Might have grown a legend throughout the land.

4.

He would have scour'd the Valley through,
Doing as now our bravest do;
Would have tried rough riding on the border,
Punishing raider and marauder;
With bearded Ashby crossing swords
As he took the Shenandoah fords;

Giving bold Stuart a bloody chase
Ere he reach'd again his trysting-place.
Horse and horseman of the foe
The blast of his bugle-charge should know,
And his men should water their steeds, at will,
From the banks of Southern river and rill.

5.

How many are there of us, in this
Discordant social wilderness,
Whose thriftiest scions the power gain,
Thro' meet conditions of sun and rain,
To yield, on the fairest blossoming shoot,
A mellow harvest of perfect fruit?
Fashion'd after so rare a type,
How should his life grow full and ripe,
There, in the passionless haunts of Peace,
Thro' trade, and tillage, and wealth's increase?

6.

But at his manor-house he dwelt,
And royally bore the name Van Ghelt;
Nor found a larger part to play,
Than such as a county magnate may:

Ruling the hustings as he would,
Lord of the rustic neighborhood;
With potent wishes and quiet words
Holding an undisputed sway.
The broadest meadows, the fattest herds,
The fleetest roadsters, the warmest cheer,
These were old Hendrick's many a year.
Daughters unto his hearthstone came,
And a son — to keep the ancient name.

7.

Often, perchance, the old man's eye
From a seaward casement would espy,
Scanning the harborage in the bay,
A ship which idly at anchor lay;
Watching her as she rose and fell,
Up and down, with the evening swell,
Her cordage slacken'd, her sails unbent,
And all her proud life somnolent.
And perchance he thought — "My life, it seems,
Like her, unfreighted with aught but dreams;
Yet I feel within me a strength to dare
Some outward voyage, I know not where!"
But the forceful impulse wore away

In the common life of every day,
And for Hendrick Van Ghelt no timely hour
Ruffled the calm of that hidden power;
Nor is it with him my words belong:
But his presence ushers in the song,
As a Lombardy poplar, lithe and hoar,
Stands at a Monmouth farmer's door,
Set like a spire against the sky —
Marking the hours, while lover and maid
Linger long in its stately shade,
And round its summit the swallows fly.

II.

1.

NATURE a devious by-way finds: solve me her secret whim,
That the seed of a gnarled oak should sprout to a sapling straight and prim;
That a russet should grow on the pippin stock, on the garden-rose a brier;
That a stalwart race, in old Hendrick's son, should smother its wonted fire.

Hermann, fond of his book, and shirking the brawny out-door sports;
Sent to college, and choosing for life the law with her mouldy courts;
Proud, and of tender honor, as well became his father's blood,
But with cold and courtly self-restraint weighing the ill and good;

Wed to a lady whose delicate veins that molten azure held,
Ichor of equal birth, wherewith our gentry their couplings weld;
Viewing his father's careless modes with half a tolerant eye,
As one who honors, regretting not, old fashions passing by.

After a while the moment came when, unto the son and heir,
A son and heir was given in turn — a moment of joy and prayer,
For the angel, who guards the portals twain, oped, in the self-same breath,
To the child the pearly gate of life, to the mother the gate of death.

Father, and son, and an infant plucking the daisies over a grave:
The swell of a boundless surge keeps on, wave following after wave;
Ever the tide of life sets toward the low invisible shore;
Whence had the current its distant source — when shall it flow no more?

2.

Nature's serene renewals, that make the scion by one remove
Bear the ancestral blossom and thrive as the forest wilding throve!
Roseate stream of life, which hides the course its ducts pursue,
To rise, like that Sicilian fount, in far-off springs anew!

For the grandsire's vigor, rude and rare, asleep in the son had lain,
To waken in Hugh, the grandson's frame, with the antique force again;
And ere the boy, said the Monmouth dames, had grown to his seventh year,
Well could you tell whose mantling blood swell'd in his temples clear.

Tall, and bent in the meeting brows; swarthy of hair and face;
Shoulders parting square, but set with the future hunts man's grace;

Eyes alive with a fire which yet the old man's visage
wore,
At times, like the flash of a thunder-cloud when the
storm is almost o'er.

3.

Toward the mettled stripling, then, the heart of the old
man yearn'd;
And thus — while Hermann Van Ghelt once more,
with a restless hunger, turn'd
From the grave of her who died so young, to his books,
and lawyer's gown,
And the ceaseless clangor of mind with mind in the
close and wrangling town —

They two, the boy and the grandsire, lived at the
manor-house, and grew,
The one to all manly arts apace, the other a youth
anew —
Pleased with the boy's free spirit, and teaching him, step
by step, to wield
The mastery over living things, and the craft of flood
and field.

Apt, indeed, was the scholar: and born with a subtle
spell to gain
The love of all dumb creatures at will; now lifting
himself, by the mane,
Over the neck of the three-year colt, for a random bare-
back ride;
Now chasing the waves on the rifted beach at the turn
of the evening tide.

Proud, in sooth, was the master: the youngster, he oft
and roundly swore,
Was fit for the life a gentleman led in the lusty days of
yore!
And he took the boy wherever he drove — to a county
fair or race;
Gave him the reins and watch'd him guide the span at
a spanking pace;

Taught him the sportsman's keen delight: to swallow
the air of morn,
And start the whistling quail that hides and feeds in
the dewy corn;

Or in clear November underwoods to bag the squirrels, and flush
The brown-wing'd mottled partridge awhir from her nest in the tangled brush;

Taught him the golden harvest laws, and the signs of sun and shower,
And the thousand beautiful secret ways of graft and fruit and flower;
Set him straight in his saddle, and cheer'd him galloping over the sand;
Sail'd with him to the fishing-shoals and placed the helm in his hand.

Often the yacht, with all sail spread, was steer'd by the fearless twain,
Around the beacon of Sandy Hook, and out in the open main;
Till the great sea-surges rolling in, as south-by-east they wore,
Lifted the bows of the dancing craft, and the buoyant hearts she bore.

But in dreamy hours, which young men know, Hugh
loved with the tide to float
Far up the deep, dark-channel'd creeks, alone in his
two-oar'd boat;
While a fiery woven tapestry o'erhung the waters
low,
The warp of the frosted chestnut, the woof with maple
and birch aglow;

Picking the grapes which dangled down; or watching
the autumn skies,
The osprey's slow imperial swoop, the scrawny bit-
tern's rise;
Nursing a longing for larger life than circled a rural
home,
An instinct of leadership within, and of action yet to
come.

4.

Curtain of shifting seasons dropt on moor and meadow
and hall,
Open your random vistas of changes that come with
time to all:

Hugh grown up to manhood; foremost, searching the
county through,
Of the Monmouth youth, in birth and grace, and the
strength to will and do.

The father, past the prime of life, and his temples
fleck'd with toil;
A bookman still, and leaving to Hugh the care of stock
and soil.
Hendrick Van Ghelt, a bow'd old man in a fireside-
corner chair,
Counting the porcelain Scripture tiles which frame the
chimney there:

The shade of the stalwart gentleman the people used to
know,
Forgetful of half the present scenes, but mindful of
long-ago;
Aroused, mayhap, by growing murmurs of Southern
feud, that came
And woke anew in his fading eyes a spark of their
ancient flame.

5.

Gazing on such a group as this, folds of the curtain drop,
Hiding the grandsire's form; and the wheels of the sliding picture stop.
Gone, that stout old Hendrick, at last! and from miles around they came —
Farmer and squire, and whispering youths, recalling his manhood's fame.

Dead: and the Van Ghelt manor closed, and the homestead acres leased;
For their owner had moved more near the town, where his daily tasks increased;
Choosing a home on the blue Passaic, whence the Newark spires and lights
Were seen, and over the salt sea-marsh the shadows of Bergen Heights.

Back and forth from his city work, the lawyer, day by day,
With the press of eager and toiling men, follow'd his wonted way;

And Hugh — he dallied with life at home, tending the
garden and grounds;
But the mansion long'd for a woman's voice to soften its
lonely sounds.

"Hugh," said Hermann Van Ghelt, at length, "choose
for yourself a wife,
Comely, and good, and of birth to match the mother
who gave you life:
No words of woman have charm'd my ear since last I
heard her voice;
And of fairest and proudest maids her son should make
a worthy choice."

But now the young man's wandering heart from the
great world turn'd away,
To long for the healthful Monmouth meads, the shores
of the breezy bay;
And often the scenes and mates he knew in boyhood he
sought again,
And roam'd thro' the well-known woods, and lay in the
grass where he once had lain.

III.

LADIES, in silks and laces,
Lunching with lips agleam,
Know you aught of the places
Yielding such fruit and cream?

South from your harbor-islands
Glisten the Monmouth hills;
There are the ocean highlands,
Lowland meadows and rills,

Berries in field and garden,
Trees with their fruitage low,
Maidens, (asking your pardon,)
Handsome as cities show.

Know you that, night and morning,
A beautiful water-fay,
Cover'd with strange adorning,
Crosses your rippling bay?

Her sides are white and sparkling;
She whistles to the shore;
Behind, her hair is darkling,
And the waters part before.

Lightly the waves she measures
Up to wharves of the town;
There, unlading her treasures,
Lovingly puts them down.

Come with me, ladies; cluster
Here on the western pier:
Look at her jewels' lustre,
Changed with the changing year!

First of the months to woo her,
June his strawberries flings
Over her garniture,
Bringing her exquisite things;

Rifling his richest casket;
Handing her, everywhere,
Garnets in crate and basket;
Knowing she soon will wear

Blackberry jet and lava,
Raspberries ruby-red,
Trinkets that August gave her,
Over her toilet spread.

After such gifts have faded,
Then the peaches are seen:
Coral and ivory braided,
Fit for an Indian queen.

And September will send her,
Proud of his wealth, and bold,
Melons glowing in splendor,
Emeralds set with gold.

So she glides to the Narrows,
Where the forts are astir:
Her speed is a shining arrow's!
Guns are silent for her.

So she glides to the ringing
Bells of the belfried town,
Kissing the wharves, and flinging
All of her jewels down.

Whence she gathers her riches,
Ladies, now would you see?
Leaving your city niches,
Wander awhile with me.

IV.

1.

THE strawberry vines lie in the sun,
Their myriad tendrils twined in one;
Spread like a carpet of richest dyes,
The strawberry-field in sunshine lies.
Each timorous berry, blushing red,
Has folded the leaves above her head,
The dark, green curtains gemm'd with dew;
But each blushful berry, peering through,
Shows like a flock of the underthread —
The crimson woof of a downy cloth
Where the elves may kneel and plight their troth.

2.

Run thro' the rustling vines, to show
Each picker an even space to go,
Leaders of twinkling cord divide
The field in lanes from side to side;

And here and there with patient care,
Lifting the leafage everywhere,
Rural maidens and mothers dot
The velvet of the strawberry-plot:
Fair and freckled, old and young,
With baskets at their girdles hung,
Searching the plants with no rude haste —
Lest berries should hang unpick'd, and waste,
Of the pulpy, odorous, hidden quest,
First gift of the fruity months, and best.

3.

Crates of the laden baskets cool
Under the trees at the meadow's edge,
Cover'd with grass and dripping sedge,
And lily leaves from the shaded pool;
Fill'd, and ready to be borne
To market before the morrow morn.
Beside them, gazing at the skies,
Hour after hour a young man lies.
From the hillside, under the trees,
He looks across the field, and sees
The waves that ever beyond it climb
Whitening the rye-slope's early prime;

At times he listens, listlessly,
To the tree-toad singing in the tree,
Or sees the cat-bird peck his fill
With feathers adroop and roguish bill.
But often, with a pleased unrest,
He lifts his glances to the west,
Watching the kirtles, red and blue,
Which cross the meadow in his view;
And he hears, anon, the busy throng
Sing the Strawberry-Pickers' Song:

4.

Rifle the sweets our meadows bear,
  Ere the day has reach'd its nooning;
While the skies are fair, and the morning air
  Awakens the thrush's tuning.

Softly the rivulet's ripples flow;
Dark is the grove that lovers know;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow.

Bend to the crimson fruit, whose stain
  Is glowing on lips and fingers;

The sun has lain in the leafy plain,
And the dust of his pinions lingers.

Softly the rivulet's ripples flow ;
Dark is the grove that lovers know ;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow.

Gather the cones which lie conceal'd,
With their vines your foreheads wreathing;
The strawberry-field its sweets shall yield
While the western winds are breathing.

Softly the rivulet's ripples flow ;
Dark is the grove that lovers know ;
Here, where the whitest blossoms blow,
The reddest and ripest berries grow.

5.

From the far hillside comes again
An echo of the pickers' strain.
Sweetly the group their cadence keep ;
Swiftly their hands the trailers sweep ;

The vines are stripp'd and the song is sung,
A joyous labor for old and young —
For the blithe children, gleaning behind
The women, marvellous treasures find.

6.

From the workers a maiden parts:
The baskets at her waistband shine
With berries that look like bleeding hearts
Of a hundred lovers at her shrine;
No eastern girl were girdled so well
With silken belt and silvery bell.
Her slender form is tall and strong;
Her voice was the sweetest in the song;
Her brown hair, fit to wear a crown,
Loose from its bonnet ripples down.
Toward the crates, that lie in the shade
Of the chestnut copse at the edge of the glade,
She moves from her mates, thro' happy rows
Of the children loving her as she goes.
Alice, *our Alice!* one and all,
Striving to stay her footsteps, call:
(For children, with skilful choice, dispense
The largesse of their innocence;)

But on, with a sister's smile, she moves
Into the darkness of the groves,
And deftly, daintily, one by one,
Shelters her baskets from the sun,
Under the network, fresh and cool,
Of lily leaves from the crystal pool.

7.

Turning her violet eyes, their rays
Glisten'd full in the young man's gaze;
And each at each, for a moment's space,
Look'd with a diffident surprise.
"Heaven!" thought Hugh, "what artless grace
That laborer's daughter glorifies!
I never saw a fairer face,
I never heard a sweeter voice;
And oh! were she my father's choice,
My father's choice and mine were one
In the strawberry-field and morning sun."

V.

LOVE, from that summer morn
Melting the souls of these two;
Love, which some of you know,
Who read this poem to-day:
Is it the same desire,
The strong, ineffable joy,
Which Jacob and Rachel felt,
When he served her father long years,
And the years were swift as days —
So great was the love he bore?
Race, advancing with time,
Growing in thought and deed,
Mastering land and sea,
Say, does the heart advance,
Are its passions more pure and strong?
They, like Nature, remain,
No more and no less than of yore.

Whoso conquers the earth,
Winning its riches and fame,
Comes to the evening at last,
The sunset of three-score years;
Confessing that Love was real,
All the rest was a dream!
The sum of his gains is dross;
The song in his praise is mute;
The wreath of his laurels fades;
But the kiss of his early love
Still burns on his trembling lip,
The spirit of one he loved
Hallows his dreams at night.
A little while, and the scenes
Of the play of Life are closed;
Come, let us rest an hour,
And by the pleasant streams,
Under the fresh, green trees,
Let us walk hand in hand,
And think of the days that were.

VI.

1.

ON river and height and salty moors the haze of autumn fell,
And the cloud of a troubled joy enwrapt the face of Hugh as well:
The spell of a secret haunt that far from home his footsteps drew;
A love, which over the brow of youth the mask of manhood threw.

Birds of the air to the father, at length, the common rumor brought:
"Your son," they sang, "in the cunning toils of a rustic lass is caught!"
"A fit betrothal," the lawyer said, "must make these follies cease;
Which shall it be? — the banker's ward? — Edith, the judge's niece?"

"Father, I pray" — said Hugh; "O yes!" out-leapt
the other's mood,
"I hear of your wanton loiterings — they ill become
your blood;
If you hold our name at such light worth, forbear to
darken the life
Of this Alice Dale" — "No, Alice Van Ghelt! father,
she is my wife."

2.

Worldlings, who say the eagle should mate with eagle,
after his kind,
Nor have learn'd from what far and diverse cliffs the
twain each other find,
Yours is the old, old story, of age forgetting its wiser
youth;
Of eyes, which are keen for others' good and blind to
an inward truth.

But the pride, which closed the father's doors, swell'd
in the young man's veins,
And he led his bride, in the sight of all, thro' the pleas-
ant Monmouth lanes,

To the little farm his grandsire gave, years since, for a
birthday gift;
Unto such havens unforeseen the barks of our fortune
drift!

There, for a happy pastoral year, he till'd the teeming
field;
Scatter'd the marl above his land, and gather'd the
orchard's yield;
And Alice, in fair and simple guise, kiss'd him at even-
fall;
And her face was to him an angel's face, and love was
all in all.

— What is this light in the southern sky, painting a red
alarm?
What is this trumpet call, which sounds thro' peaceful
village and farm;
Jarring the sweet idyllic rest; stilling the children's
throng;
Hushing the cricket on the hearth, and the lovers' even-
ing song?

VII.

1.

WAR! war! war!
Manning of forts on land and ships for sea;
Innumerous lips that speak the righteous wrath
Of days which have been and again may be;
Flashing of tender eyes disdaining tears;
A pause of men with indrawn breath,
Knowing it awful for the people's will
Thus, thus to end the mellow years
Of harvest, growth, prosperity,
And bring the years of famine, fire, and death,
Tho' fear and a nation's shame are more awful still.

2.

War! war! war!
A thundercloud in the South in the early Spring:
The launch of a thunderbolt, and then,

With one red flare, the lightning stretch'd its wing,
And a rolling echo roused a million men!
Then the ploughman left his field;
The smith, at his clanging forge,
Forged him a sword to wield;
From meadow, and mountain-gorge,
And the western plains, they came,
Fronting the storm and flame.
War! war! war!
Heaven aid the right!
God nerve the hero's arm in the fearful fight!
God send the women sleep, in the long, long night,
When the breasts on whose strength they lean'd shall heave no more.

VIII.

1.

SPAKE each mother to her son,
Ere an ancient field was won:
"Spartan, who me your mother call,
Our country is mother of us all;
In her you breathe, and move, and are;
In peace for her to live — in war
For her to die — is, gloriously,
A patriot to live and die!"

2.

The times are now as grand as then
With dauntless women, earnest men;
For thus the mothers whom we know
Bade their sons to battle go;
And, with a smile, the loyal North
Sent her million freemen forth.

3.

"What men should stronger-hearted be
Than we, who dwell by the open sea —
Tilling the lands our fathers won
In battle on the Monmouth Plains?
Ah! a memory remains,
Telling us what they have done,
Teaching us what we should do.
Let us send our rightful share —
Hard-handed yeomen, horsemen rare,
A hundred riders fleet and true."

4.

A hundred horsemen, led by Hugh:
"Were he still here," their captain thought,
"The brave old man, who train'd my youth,
What a leader he would make
Where the battle's topmost billows break!
The crimes, which brought our land to ruth,
How in his soul they would have wrought!
God help me, no deed of mine shall shame
The honor of my grandsire's name;
And my father shall see how pure and good
Runs in these veins the olden blood."

5.

Shore and inland their men have sent:
Away, to the mounted regiment,
The silver-hazed Potomac heights,
The circling raids, the hundred fights,
The booth, the bivouac, the tent.
Away, from the happy Monmouth farms,
To noontide marches, night alarms,
Death in the shadowy oaken glades,
Emptied saddles, broken blades,
All the turmoil that soldiers know
Who gallop to meet a mortal foe.
Some to conquer, some to fall:
War hath its chances for one and all.

6.

Heroes, who render up their lives
On the country's fiery altar-stone —
They do not offer themselves alone.
What shall become of the soldiers' wives?
They stay behind in the lonely cots,
Weeding the humble garden-plots;

Some to speed the needle and thread,
For the soldiers' children must be fed;
All to sigh, thro' the toilsome day,
And at night teach lisping lips to pray
For the fathers marching far away.

IX.

1.

CLOUD and flame on the dark frontier,
Veiling the hosts embattled there:
Peace, and a boding stillness, here,
Where the wives at home repeat their prayer.

2.

The locusts sing a plaintive song,
The weary August days are long;
The cattle miss their master's call
When they see the sunset shadows fall.
The youthful mistress, at even-tide,
Stands by the cedarn wicket's side,
With both hands pushing from the front
Her hair, as those who listen are wont;
Gazing toward the unknown South,
While silent whispers part her mouth:

3.

"O, if a woman could only find
Other work than to wait behind,
Thro' midnight dew and noonday drouth —
To wait behind, and fear, and pray!
O, if a soldier's wife could say —
'Where thou goest, I will go;
Kiss thee ere thou meet'st the foe;
Where thou lodgest, worst or best,
Share and soothe thy broken rest!'
— Alas, to stifle her pain and wait,
This was ever a woman's fate!
But the lonely hours at least may be
Pass'd a little nearer thee,
And the city thou guardest with thy life,
Thou'lt guard more fondly for holding thy wife."

4.

Ah, tender heart of woman leal,
Supple as wax and strong as steel!
Thousands as faithful and as lone,
Following each some dearest one,
Found in those early months a home,
Under the brightness of that dome

Whose argent arches for aye enfold
The hopes of a people in their hold —
Irradiate, in the sight of all
Who guard the Capital's outer wall.
Lastly came one, amid the rest,
Whose form a sun-burnt soldier prest,
As lovers embrace, in respite lent
From unfulfill'd imprisonment.
And Alice found a new content:
Dearer for perils that had been
Were halcyon meetings, far between;
Better, for dangers yet to be,
The moments she still his face could see;
These, for the pure and loving wife,
Were the silver bars that mark'd her life,
That number'd the days melodiously;
While, thro' all noble daring, Hugh
From a Captain to a Colonel grew,
And his praises sweeten'd every tongue
That reach'd her ear — for old and young
Gave him the gallant leader's due.

X.

1.

FLIGHT of a meteor thro' the sky,
Scattering firebrands, arrows and death:
A baleful year, that hurtled by,
While ancient kingdoms held their breath.

2.

The Capital grew aghast with sights
Flash'd from the lurid river-heights,
Full of the fearful things sent down,
By demons haunting the middle air,
Into the hot, beleaguer'd town —
All woful sights and sounds, which seem
The fantasy of a sickly dream:
Crowded wickedness everywhere;
Everywhere a stifled sense
Of the noonday-striding pestilence;

Every church, from wall to wall,
A closely-mattrass'd hospital;
And ah! our bleeding heroes, brought
From smouldering fields so vainly fought,
Filling each place where a man could lie
To gasp a dying wish — and die;
While the sombre sky, relentlessly,
Cover'd the town with a funeral-pall,
A death-damp, trickling funeral-pall.

3.

Always the dust and mire; the sound
Of the rumbling wagon's ceaseless round,
The cannon jarring the trampled ground.
The sad, unvarying picture wrought
Upon the pitying woman's heart
Of Alice, the Colonel's wife, and taught
Her spirit to choose the better part —
The labor of loving angels, sent
To men in their sore encompassment.
Daily her gentle steps were bent
Thro' the thin pathways which divide
The patient sufferers, side from side,
In dolorous wards, where Death and Life

Wage their silent, endless strife ;
And she loosed for all her soothing words,
Sweet as the songs of homestead birds.
Sometimes that utterance musical
On the soldier's failing sense would fall,
Seeming, almost, a prelude given
Of whispers that calm the air of Heaven ;
While her white hand, moistening his poor lips
With the draught which slakeless fever sips,
Pointed him to that fount above —
River of water of life and love —
Stream without price, of whose purity
Whoever thirsteth may freely buy.

4.

How many — whom in their mortal pain
She tended — 'twas given her to gain,
Thro' Him who died upon the rood,
For that divine beatitude,
Who of us all can ever know
Till the golden books their records show ?
But she saw their dying faces light,
And felt a rapture in the sight.
And many a sufferer's earthly life

Thank'd for new strength the Colonel's wife;
Many a soldier turn'd his head,
Watching her pass his narrow bed,
Or, haply, his feeble frame would raise,
As the dim lamp her form reveal'd;
And, like the children in the field,
(For soldiers like little ones become —
As simple in heart, as frolicsome,)
One and another breath'd her name,
Blessing her as she went and came.

5.

So, thro' all actions pure and good,
Unknowing evil, shame, or fear,
She grew to perfect ladyhood —
Unwittingly the mate and peer
Of the proudest of her husband's blood.

XI.

1.

LIKE an affluent, royal town, the summer camps
Of a hundred thousand men are stretch'd away.
At night, like multitudinous city lamps,
Their numberless watch-fires beacon, clear and still,
And a glory beams from the zenith lit
With lurid vapors that over its star-lights flit;
But wreaths of opaline cloud o'erhang, by day,
The crystal-pointed tents, from hill to hill,
From vale to vale — until
The heavens on endless peaks their curtain lay.
A magical city! spread to-night
On hills which slope within our sight:
To-morrow, as at the waving of a wand,
Tents, guidons, bannerols, are moved afar —
Rising elsewhere, as rises a morning-star,
Or the dream of Aladdin's palace in fairy-land.

2.

Camp after camp, like marble square on square;
Street following street, with many a park between;
Bright bayonet-sparkles in the tremulous air;
Far-fading, purple smoke above their sheen;
Green central fields with flags like flowers abloom;
And, all about, close-order'd populous life.
But here no festering trade, no civic strife:
Only the blue-clad soldiers everywhere,
Waiting to-morrow's victory or doom;
Men of the hour, to whom these pictures seem,
Like schoolboy thoughts, half-real, half a dream.

3.

Camps of the cavalry, apart,
Are pitch'd with nicest art
On hilly suburbs where old forests grow.
Here, by itself, one glimmers thro' the pines:
One, whose high-hearted chief we know:
A thousand men leap when his bugles blow;
A thousand horses curvet at his lines,
Pawing the turf; among them come and go
The jacketed troopers, changed by wind and rain,
Storm, raid and skirmish, sunshine, midnight dew,
To bronzed men who never ride in vain.

4.

In the great wall-tent at the head of the square,
The Colonel hangs his sword, and there
Huge logs burn high in front at the close of the day;
And the captains gather ere the long tattoo,
While the band of buglers play.
Then come the tales of home and the troopers' song:
Clear over the distant outposts float the notes,
And the lone vidette to catch them listens long;
And the officer of the guard, upon his round,
Pauses, to hear the sound
Of the chiming chorus pour'd from a score of throats:

5.

Our good steeds snuff the evening air,
Our pulses with their purpose tingle;
The foeman's fires are twinkling there;
He leaps to hear our sabres jingle!
HALT!
Each carbine sent its whizzing ball:
Now, cling! clang! forward all,
Into the fight!

Dash on beneath the smoking dome:
Thro' level lightnings gallop nearer!

One look to Heaven! No thoughts of home:
The guidons that we bear are dearer.
CHARGE!
Cling! clang! forward all!
Heaven help those whose horses fall:
Cut left and right!

They flee before our fierce attack!
They fall! they spread in broken surges.
Now, comrades, bear our wounded back,
And leave the foeman to his dirges.
WHEEL!
The bugles sound the swift recall:
Cling! clang! backward all!
Home, and good-night!

XII.

1.

WHEN April rains, and the great spring-tide,
Cover the lowlands far and wide,
And eastern winds blow somewhat harsh
Over the salt and mildew'd marsh,
Then the grasses take deeper root,
Sucking, athirst and resolute ;
And when the waters eddy away,
Flowing in trenches to Newark Bay,
The fibrous blades grow rank and tall,
And from their tops the reed-birds call.
Five miles in width the moor is spread ;
Two broad rivers its borders thread ;
The schooners, which up their channels pass,
Seem to be sailing in the grass,
Save as they rise with the moon-drawn sea,
Twice in the day, continuously.

2.

Gray with an inward struggle grown,
The brooding lawyer, Hermann Van Ghelt,
Lived at the mansion-house, alone —
But a chilling cloud at his bosom felt,
Like the fog which crept, at morn and night,
Across the rivers in his sight,
And rising, left the moorland plain
Bare and spectral and cold again.
He saw the one tall hill, which stood
Huge with its quarry and gloaming wood,
And the creeping engines, as they hist
Thro' the dim reaches of the mist —
Serpents, with ominous eyes aglow,
Thridding the grasses to and fro;
And he thought how each dark, receding train
Carried its freight of joy and pain,
On toil's adventure and fortune's quest,
To the troubled city of unrest;
And he knew that under the desolate pall
Of the bleak horizon, skirting all,
The burden'd ocean heaved, and roll'd
Its moaning surges manifold.

3.

Often at evening, gazing through
The eastward windows on such a view,
Its sense enwrapt him as with a shroud;
Often at noon, in the city's crowd,
He saw, as 'twere in a mystic glass,
Unbidden faces before him pass —
A soldier, with eyes unawed and mild
As the eyes of one who was his child —
A woman's visage, like that which blest
A year of his better years the best;
And the plea of a voice, remember'd well,
Deep in his secret hearing fell.
And as week by week its records brought
Of heroes fallen as they fought,
There little by little awakened
In the lawyer's heart a shapeless dread,
A fear of the tidings, which of all
On ear and spirit heaviest fall —
Changeless sentence of mortal fate,
Freezing the marrow with — Too Late!

XIII.

1.

THUS — when ended the morning tramp,
And the regiment came back to camp,
And the Colonel, tho' breathing hard with pain,
Was carried within the lines again —
Thus a Color-Sergeant told
The story of that skirmish bold:

2.

"'Twas an hour past midnight, twelve hours ago —
We were all asleep, you know,
Save the officer on his rounds,
And the guard-relief — when sounds
The signal-gun! once — twice —
Thrice! — and then, in a trice,
The long assembly-call rang sharp and clear,
Till 'Boots and Saddles' made us scamper like mice!

No time to waste
In asking whether a fight was near;
Over the horses went their traps in haste;
Not ten minutes had past
Ere we stood in marching gear,
And the call of the roll was follow'd by orders fast:
'Prepare to mount!'
'Mount!' — and the company ranks were made;
Then in each rank, by fours, we took the count,
And the head of the column wheel'd for the long parade.

3.

"There, on the beaten ground,
The regiment form'd from right to left;
Our Colonel, straight in his saddle, look'd around —
Reining the stallion in, that felt the heft
Of his rider, and stamp'd his foot, and wanted to dance.
At last the order came:
'By twos: forward, march!' — and the same
From each officer in advance;
And, as the rear-guard left the spot,
We broke into the even trot.

4.

"'Trot, march!' — two by two,
In the dust and in the dew,
Roads and open meadows through.
Steadily we kept the tune
Underneath the stars and moon.
None, except the Colonel, knew
What our orders were to do;
Whether on a forage-raid
We were tramping, boot and blade,
Or a close reconnoissance
Ere the army should advance;
One thing certain, we were bound
Straight for Stuart's camping-ground.
Plunging into forest-shade,
Well we knew each glen and glade!
Sweet they smell'd — the pine and oak,
And of home my comrade spoke.
Tramp, tramp, out again,
Sheer across the ragged plain,
Where the moonbeams glaze our steel
And the fresher air we feel.
Thus a triple league, and more,
Till behind us spreads the gray

Pallid light of breaking day,
And on cloudy hills, before,
Rebel camp-fires smoke away;
Hard by yonder clump of pines
We should touch the rebel lines:
'Walk, march!' and, softly now,
Gain yon hillock's westward brow.

5.

"'Halt!' and 'Right into line!' — There on the ridge
In battle-order we let the horses breathe;
The Colonel raised his glass, and scann'd the bridge,
The tents on the bank beyond, the stream beneath.
Just then the sun first broke from the redder east,
And their pickets saw five hundred of us, at least,
Stretch'd like a dark stockade against the sky;
We heard their long-roll clamor loud and nigh:
In half a minute, a rumbling battery whirl'd
To a mound in front, unlimbering with a will,
And a twelve-pound solid shot came right along,
Singing a devilish morning-song,
And touch'd my comrade's leg, and the poor boy curl'd
And dropt to the turf, holding his bridle still.

Well, we moved out of range — were wheeling round,
I think, for the Colonel had taken his look at their ground,
(Thus he was order'd, it seems, and nothing more:
Hardly worth coming at midnight for!)
When, over the bridge, a troop of the enemy's horse
Dash'd out upon our course,
Giving us hope of a tussle to warm our blood.
Then we cheer'd, to a man, that our early call
Hadn't been sounded for nothing, after all;
And halting, to wait their movements, the column stood.

6.

"Then into squadrons we saw their ranks enlarge,
And slow and steady they moved to the charge,
Shaking the ground as they came in carbine-range.
'Front into line! March! Halt! Front!'
Our Colonel cried; and in squadrons, to meet the brunt,
We too from the walk to the trot our paces change:
'Gallop, march!' — and, hot for the fray,
Pistols and sabres drawn, we canter away.

7.

"Twenty rods over the slippery clover
We gallop'd as gaily as lady and lover;
Held the reins lightly, our good weapons tightly,
Five solid squadrons all shining and sightly;
Not too fast — half the strength of our brave steeds to wasten,
Not too slow — for the warmth of their fire made us hasten,
As it came with a rattle and open'd the battle,
Tumbling from saddles ten fellows of mettle;
So the distance grew shorter, their sabres shone broader;
Then the bugle's wild blare and the Colonel's loud order —

"Charge! and we sprang, while the far echo rang,
And their bullets, like bees, in our ears fiercely sang.
Forward we strode to pay what we owed,
Right at the head of their column we rode;
Together we dash'd, and the air reel'd and flash'd;
Stirrups, sabres and scabbards, all shatter'd and crash'd,
As we cut in and out, right and left, all about,
Hand to hand, blow for blow, shot for shot, shout for shout,

Till the earth seem'd to boil with the heat of our toil;
But in less than five minutes we felt them recoil,
Heard their shrill rally sound, and, like hares from the hound,
Each ran for himself: one and all fled the ground.
Then we goaded them up to their guns, where they cower'd,
And the breeze clear'd the field where the battle-cloud lower'd.
Three-score of them lay, to teach them the way
Van Ghelt and his rangers their compliments pay;
But a plenty, I swear, of our saddles were bare:
Friend and foe, horse and rider, lay sprawl'd everywhere;
'Twas hard hitting, you see, Sir, that gain'd us the day!

8.

"Yes, they too had their say before they fled,
And the loss of our Colonel is worse than all the rest.
One of their captains aim'd at him, as he led
The foremost charge — I shot the rascal dead,
But the Colonel fell, with a bullet thro' his breast.
We lifted him from the mire, when the field was won,

And their captured colors shaded him from the sun
In the farmer's wagon we took for his homeward ride;
But he never said a word, nor open'd his eyes,
Till we reach'd the camp. In yon hospital tent he lies,
And his poor young wife will come to watch by his side.
The surgeon hasn't found the bullet, as yet,
But he says it's a mortal wound. Where will you get
Another such man to lead us, if he dies?"

XIV.

1.

SPRUNG was the bow at last;
And the barb'd and pointed dart —
Keen with stings of the past,
Barb'd with a vain remorse —
Clove for itself a course,
Straight to the father's heart;
And a lonely wanderer stood,
Mazed in a mist of thought,
On the edge of a field of blood.
— For a battle had been fought,
And the cavalry skirmish was but a wild prelude
To the broader carnage that heap'd a field in vain:
A terrible battle had been fought,
Till its changeful current brought
Tumultuous angry surges roaring back
To the lines where our army had lain.

The lawyer — driven hard by an inward pain —
Was crossing, in search of a dying son, the track
Where the deluge rose and fell, and its stranded wrack
Had sown the loathing earth with human slain.

2.

Friends and foes — who could discover which,
As they mark'd the zigzag, outer ditch,
Or lay so cold and still in the bush,
Fallen and trampled down in the last wild rush?
Then the shatter'd forest trees; the clearing there
Where a battery stood; dead horses, pawing the air
With horrible upright hoofs; a mangled mass
Of wounded and stifled men in the low morass;
And the long trench dug in haste for a burial-pit,
Whose yawning length and breadth all comers fit.

3.

And over the dreadful precinct, like the lights
That flit thro' graveyard walks in dismal nights,
Men with lanterns were groping among the dead,
Holding the flame to every hueless face,
And bearing those, whose life had not wholly fled,
On stretchers, that look'd like biers, from the ghastly
place.

4.

The air above seem'd heavy with errant souls,
Dense with ghosts from those gory forms arisen —
Each rudely driven from its prison,
'Mid the harsh jar of rattling musket-rolls,
And quivering throes, and unexpected force;
In helpless waves adrift confusedly,
Freighting the sombre haze without resource.
Thro' all there trickled, from the pitying sky,
An infinite mist of tears upon the ground,
Muffling the groans of anguish with its sound.

5.

On the borders of such a land, on the bounds of Death,
The stranger, shuddering, moved as one who saith:
"God! what a doleful clime, a drear domain!"
And onward, struggling with his pain,
Traversed the endless camp-fires, spark by spark,
Past sentinels that challenged from the dark,
Guided thro' camp and camp, to one long tent
Whose ridge a flying bolt from the field had rent,
Letting the midnight mist, the battle din,
Fall on the hundred forms that writhed within.

6.

Beyond the gaunt Zouave at the nearest cot,
And the bugler shot in the arm, who lay beside —
Looking down at the wounded spot
Even then, for all the pain, with boyish pride —
And a score of men, with blankets open'd wide,
Showing the gory bandages which bound
The paths of many a deadly wound,
— Over all these the stranger's vision sped
To one low stretcher, at whose head
A woman, bow'd and brooding, sate,
As sit the angels of our fate,
Who, motionless, our births and deaths await.
He whom she tended moan'd and tost,
Restless, as some laborious vessel, lost
Close to the port for which we saw it sail,
Groans in the long perpetual gale;
But she, that watch'd the storm, forbore to weep.
Sometimes the stranger saw her move
To others, who also with their anguish strove;
But ever again her constant footsteps turn'd
To one who made sad mutterings in his sleep;
Ever she listen'd to his breathings deep,
Or trimm'd the midnight lamp that feebly burn'd.

XV.

LEANING her face on her hand
She sat by the side of Hugh,
Silently watching him breathe,
As a lily curves its grace
Over the broken form
Of the twin which stood by its side.
A glory upon her head
Trail'd from the light above,
Gilding her tranquil hair
In ripples that faded out
Where a shadow hid the floor.
There she sat in a trance,
And her soul flow'd thro' the past,
As a river, day and night,
Passes thro' changeful shores —
Sees, on the two-fold bank,
Meadow and mossy grange,

Castles on hoary crags,
Forests, and fortress'd towns,
And shrinks from the widening bay,
And the darkness which overhangs
The unknown, limitless sea.
Was it a troubled dream,
All that the stream of her life
Had mirror'd along its course?
All — from that summer morn
When she seem'd to meet in the field
One whom she vow'd to love,
And with whom she wander'd thence,
Leaving the home of her youth?
Were they visions indeed —
The pillars of smoke and flame,
The sound of a hundred fights,
The grandeur, and ah! the gloom,
The shadows which circled her now,
And the wraith of the one she loved
Gliding away from her grasp,
Vanishing swiftly and sure?
Yes, it was all a dream;
And the strange, sad man, who moved
To the other side of the couch,

Bending over it long,
Pressing his hand on his heart,
And gazing, anon, in her eyes —
He, with his scanty hair,
And pallid, repentant face,
He, too, was a voiceless dream,
A vision like all the rest;
He with the rest would fade
When the day should dawn again,
When the spectral mist of night,
Fused with the golden morn,
Should melt in the eastern sky.

XVI.

1.

"STEADY! forward the squadron!" cries
The dying soldier, and strives amain
To rise from the pillow and his pain.
Wild and wandering are his eyes,
Painting once more, on the empty air,
The wrathful battle's wavering glare.
"Hugh!" said Alice, and check'd her fear,
"Speak to me, Hugh; your father is here."
"Father! what of my father? he
Is anything but a father to me;
What need I of a father, when
I have the hearts of a thousand men?"
"— Alas, Sir, he knows not me nor you!"
And with caressing words, the twain —
The man with all remorsefulness,
The woman with loving tenderness —

Sooth'd the soldier to rest anew,
And, as the madness left his brain,
Silently watch'd his sleep again.

2.

And again the father and the wife,
Counting the precious sands of life,
Look'd each askance, with those subtle eyes,
Which probe thro' all human mysteries
And all hidden motives fathom well;
But the mild regard of Alice fell,
Meeting the other's contrite glance,
On his meek and furrow'd countenance,
Scathed, as it seem'd, with troubled thought:
"Surely good angels have with him wrought,"
She murmur'd, and halted, even across
The sorrowful threshold of her loss,
To pity his thin and changing hair,
And her heart forgave him, unaware.

3.

And he — who saw how she still repress
A drear foreboding within her breast,
And, by her wifehood's nearest right,

Ever more closely thro' the night,
Clave unto him whose quicken'd breath
Came like a waft from the realm of Death —
He felt what a secret, powerful tie
Bound them in one, mysteriously.
He studied her features, as she stood
Lighting the shades of that woful place
With the presence of her womanhood,
And thought — as the dying son had thought
When her beauty first his vision caught —
"I never saw a fairer face;
I never heard a sweeter voice!"
And a sad remembrance thridded fast
Thro' all the labyrinth of the past,
Till he said, as the scales fell off at last,
"How could I blame him for his choice?"
Then he look'd upon the sword, which lay
At the headboard, under the night-lamp's ray —
He saw the coat, the stains, the dust,
The gilded eagles worn with rust,
The swarthy forehead and matted hair
Of the strong, brave hero lying there —
And he felt how gently Hugh held command,
The life how gallant, the death how grand;

And with trembling lips, and the words that choke,
And the tears which burn the cheek, he spoke:
"Where is the father who would not joy
In the manhood of such a noble boy?
This life, which had being thro' my own,
Was a better life than I have known;
O, that its fairness should be earth,
Ere I could prize it at its worth!"
"Too late! too late!" — he made his moan —
"I find a daughter, and her alone.
He deem'd you worthy to bear his name,
His spotless honor, his lasting fame;
I, who have wrong'd you, bid you live
To comfort the lonely — and forgive."

4.

Dim and silvery from the east,
The infant light of another morn
Over the stirring camps was borne;
But the soldier's pulse had almost ceased,
And there crept upon his brow the change —
Ah, how sudden: alas, how strange!
Yet again his eyelids open'd wide,
And his glances moved to either side,

This time with a clear intelligence
Which took all objects in its sense,
A power to comprehend the whole
Of the scene that girded his passing soul.
The father, who saw it, slowly drew
Nearer to her that wept anew,
And gather'd her tenderly in his hold —
As mortals their precious things enfold,
Grasping them late and sure ; and Hugh
Gazed on the two a space, and smiled
With the look he wore when a little child :
A smile of pride and peace, that meant
A free forgiveness — a full content ;
Then his clouding sight an instant clung
To the flag whose stars above him hung,
And his blunted senses seem'd to hear
The long reveilleé sounding near ;
But the ringing clarion could not vie
With the richer notes which fill'd his ear,
Nor the breaking morn with that brighter sky.

XVII.

1.

WEAR no armor, timid heart;
Fear no keen misfortune's dart,
Want, nor scorn, nor secret blow
Dealt thee by thy mortal foe.

2.

Let the fates their weapons wield,
For a wondrous woven shield
Shall be given thee, ere long.
Mesh of gold were not so strong;
Not so soft were silken shred;
Not so fine the spider's thread
Barring the enchanted door
In that tale of ancient lore,
Guarding, silently and well,
All within the mystic cell.

Such a shield, where'er thou art,
Shall be thine, O wounded heart!
From the ills that compass thee
Thou behind it shalt be free;
Envy, slander, malice, all
Shall withdraw them from thy — Pall.

3.

Build no house with patient care,
Fair to view, and strong as fair;
Wall'd with noble deeds' renown;
Shining over field and town,
Seen from land and sea afar,
Proud in peace, secure in war.
For the moments never sleep,
Building thee a castle-keep —
Proof alike 'gainst heat and cold,
Earthly sorrows manifold,
Sickness, failure of thine ends,
And the falling off of friends.
Treason, want, dishonor, wrong,
None of these shall harm thee long.
Every day a beam is made;
Hour by hour a stone is laid.

Back the cruellest shall fall
From the warder at the wall;
Foeman shall not dare to tread
On the ramparts o'er thy head;
Dark triumphant flags shall wave
From the fastness of thy — Grave.

XVIII.

1.

THERE'S an hour, at the fall of night, when the blissful souls
Of those who were dear in life seem close at hand;
There's a holy midnight hour, when we speak their names
In pauses between our songs on the trellis'd porch,
And we sing the hymns which they loved, and almost know
Their phantoms are somewhere with us, filling the gaps,
The sorrowful chasms left when they pass'd away;
And we seem, in the hush of our yearning voices, to hear
Their warm, familiar breathing somewhere near.

2.

At such an hour — when again the Autumn haze
Silver'd the moors, and the new moon peer'd, from the west,
Over the blue Passaic, and the mansion shone
Clear and white on the ridge which skirts the stream —
At the twilight hour a man and a woman sat
On the open porch, in the garb of those who mourn.
Father and daughter they seem'd; and with thoughtful eyes,
Silent, and full of the past, they watch'd the skies.

XIX.

SILENT they were, not sad, for the sod, that covers the grave
Of those we have given to fame, smells not of the hateful mould,
But of roses and fragrant ferns, while marvellous immortelles
Twine in glory above, and their graces give us joy.
Silent, but oh! not sad: for the babe on the couch within
Drank at the mother's breast, till the current of life, outdrawn,
Open'd inflowing currents of faith and sweet content;
And the gray-hair'd man, repenting in tears the foolish past,
Had seen in the light from those inscrutable infant eyes —

Fresh from the unknown world — the glimpses which,
long ago,
Gladden'd his golden youth, and had found his soul at
peace.

XX.

1.

LASTLY the moon went down; like burnish'd steel
The infinite ether wrapt the crispy air.
Then, arm in arm on the terrace-walk, the pair
Moved in that still communion — where we feel
No need of audible questions and replies,
But mutual pulses all our thoughts reveal;
And, as they turn'd to leave the outer night,
Far in the cloudless North, a radiant sight
Stay'd their steps for a while and held their eyes.

2.

There, thro' the icy mail of the boreal heaven,
Two-edged and burning swords by unseen hands
Were thrust, till a climbing throng its path had riven
Straight from the Pole, and, over seas and lands,
Push'd for the zenith, while from east to west

Flamed many a towering helm and gorgeous crest;
And then — a rarer pageant than the rest —
An angrier light glared from the southern sky,
As if the austral trumpets made reply,
And the wrath of a challenged realm had swiftly tost
On the empyrean the flags of another host:
Pennons with or and scarlet blazing high,
Crimson and orange banners proudly crost;
While thro' the environ'd space, that lay between
Their adverse fronts, the ether seem'd to tremble,
Shuddering to view such ruthless foes assemble,
And one by one the stars withdrew their sheen.

3.

The two, enrapt with such a vision, saw
Its ominous surges, dense, prismatic, vast,
Heaved from the round horizon; and in awe,
Musing awhile, were silent. Till at last
The younger, fair in widow's garments, spoke:
"See, father, how, from either pole,
The deep, innumerous columns roll;
As if the angelic tribes their concord broke,
And the fierce war that scathes our land had spread
Above, and the very skies with ire were red!"

4.

Even as she spoke, there shone
High in the topmost zenith a central spark,
A luminous cloud that glow'd against the dark;
Its halo, widening toward either zone,
Took on the semblance of a mystic hand
Stretch'd from an unknown height: and lo! a band
Of scintillant jewels twined around the wrist,
Sapphire and ruby, opal, amethyst,
Turquoise, and diamond, link'd with flashing joints.
Its wide puissant reach began to clasp,
In countless folds, the interclashing points
Of outshot light, gathering their angry hues —
North, south, east, west — with noiseless grasp,
By some divine, resistless law,
Till everywhere the wondering watchers saw
A thousand colors blend and interfuse,
In aureate wave on wave ascending higher,
Immeasurable, white, a spotless fire:
And, glory circling glory there, behold
Gleams of the heavenly city wall'd with gold!

5.

"Daughter," the man replied, (his face was bright
With the effulgent reflex of that light,)
"The time shall come, by merciful Heaven will'd,
When these celestial omens shall be fulfill'd,
Our strife be closed and the nation purged of sin,
And a pure and holier union shall begin;
And a jarring race be drawn, throughout the land,
Into new brotherhood by some strong hand;
And the baneful glow and splendor of war shall fade
In the whiter light of love, that, from sea to sea,
Shall soften the rage of hosts in arms array'd,
And melt into share and shaft each battle-blade,
And brighten the hopes of a people great and free.
But in the story told of a nation's woes,
Of the sacrifices made for a century's fault,
The fames of fallen heroes shall ever shine,
Serene, and high, and crystalline as those
Fair stars, which reappear in yonder vault;
In the country's heart their written names shall be,
Like that of a single one in mine and thine.

II.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ALECTRYÔN.

GREAT ARÊS, whose tempestuous godhood found
Delight in those thick-tangled solitudes
Of Hebrus, water'd tracts of rugged Thrace —
Great Arês, scouring the Odrysian wilds,
There met Alectryôn, a Thracian boy,
Stalwart beyond his years, and swift of foot
To hunt from morn till eve the white-tooth'd boar.
"What hero," said the war-God, "join'd his blood
With that of Hæmian nymph, to make thy form
So fair, thy soul so daring, and thy thews
So lusty for the contest on the plains
Wherein the fleet Odrysæ tame their steeds?"

From that time forth the twain together chased
The boar, or made their coursers cleave the breadth
Of yellow Hebrus, and, thro' vales beyond,

Drove the hot leopard foaming to his lair.
And day by day Alectryôn dearer grew
To the God's restless spirit, till from Thrace
He bore him, even to Olympos; there
Before him set immortal food and wine,
That fairer youth and lustier strength might serve
His henchman; bade him bear his arms, and cleanse
The crimson'd burnish of his brazen car:
So dwelt the Thracian youth among the Gods.

There came a day when Arês left at rest
His spear, and smooth'd his harmful, unhelm'd brow,
Calling Alectryôn to his side, and said:
"The shadow of Olympos longer falls
Thro' misty valleys of the lower world;
The Earth shall be at peace a summer's night;
Men shall have calm, and the unconquer'd host
Peopling the walls of Troas, and the tribes
Of Greece, shall sleep sweet sleep upon their arms;
For Aphroditê, queen of light and love,
Awaits me, blooming in the House of Fire,
Girt with the cestus, infinite in grace,
Dearer than battle and the joy of war:
She, for whose charms I would renounce the sword

Forever, even godhood, would she wreathe
My brows with myrtle, dwelling far from Heaven.
Hêphæstos, the lame cuckold, unto whose
Misshapen squalor Zeus hath given my queen,
To-night seeks Lemnos, and his sooty vault
Roof'd by the roaring surge; wherein, betimes,
He and his Cyclops pound the ringing iron,
Forging great bolts for Zeus, and welding mail,
White-hot, in shapes for Heroes and the Gods.
Do thou, Alectryôn, faithful to my trust,
Hie with me to the mystic House of Fire.
Therein, with wine and fruitage of her isle,
Sweet odors, and all rarest sights and sounds,
My Paphian mistress shall regale us twain.
But when the feast is over, and thou see'st
Arês and Aphroditê pass beyond
The portals of that chamber, whence all winds
Of love flow ever toward the four fold Earth,
Watch by the entrance, sleepless, while we sleep;
And warn us ere the glimpses of the Dawn;
Lest Hêlios, the spy, may peer within
Our windows, and to Lemnos speed apace,
In envy clamoring to the hobbling smith,
Hêphæstos, of the wrong I do his bed."

Thus Arês; and the Thracian boy, well-pleased,
Swore to be faithful to his trust, and liege
To her, the perfect queen of light and love.
So saying, they reach'd the fiery, brazen gates,
Encolumn'd high by Heaven's artisan,
Hêphæstos, rough, begrim'd, and halt of foot —
Yet unto whom was Aphroditê given
By Zeus, because from his misshapen hands
All shapely things found being; but the gift
Brought him no joyance, nor made pure his fame,
Like those devices which he wrought himself,
Grim, patient, unbeloved.

There pass'd they in
At portals of the high, celestial House,
And on beyond the starry-golden court,
Thro' amorous hidden ways, and winding paths
Set round with splendors, to the spangled hall
Of secret audience for noble guests.
Here Charis labor'd, so Hêphæstos bade,
Moulding the room's adornments; here she built
Low couches, framed in ivory, overlain
With skins of pard and panther, and the fleece
Of sheep which graze the low Hesperian isles;

And in the midst a cedarn table spread,
Whereon the loves of all the elder Gods
Were wrought in gold and silver; and the light
Of quenchless rubies sparkled over all.
Thus far came Arês and Alectryôn,
First leaving shield and falchion at the door,
That nought of violence should haunt that air
Serene, but laughter-loving peace, and joys
The meed of Gods, once given men to know.

Then, from her daïs in the utmost hall,
Shone toward them Aphroditê, not by firm
Imperial footfalls, but in measureless
Procession, even as, wafted by her doves,
She kiss'd the faces of the yearning waves
From Cyprus to the high Thessalian mount,
Claiming her throne in Heaven; so light she stept,
Untended by her Graces; only he,
Erôs, th' eternal child, with welcomings
Sprang forward to Arês, like a beam of light
Flash'd from a coming brightness, ere it comes;
And the ambrosial mother to his glee
Join'd her own joy, coy as she glided near
Arês, till Arês closed her in his arms,

An instant, with the perfect love of Gods.
And the wide chamber gleam'd with their delight,
And infinite tinkling laughters rippled through
Far halls, wherefrom no boding echoes came.

But when the passion of their meeting fell
To dalliance, the mighty lovers, sunk
Within those ivory couches golden-fleeced,
Made wassail at the wondrous board, and held
Sweet stolen converse till the middle night.
And soulless servitors came gliding in,
Handmaidens, wrought of gold, the marvellous work
Of lame Hêphæstos; having neither will,
Nor voice, yet bearing, on their golden trays,
Lush fruits and Cyprian wine and, intermixt,
Olympian food and nectar, earth with heaven.
These Erôs and Alectryôn took therefrom,
And placed before the lovers; and, meanwhile,
Melodious breathings from unfinger'd lutes,
Warblings from unseen nightingales, and songs
From lips uncrimson'd, scatter'd music round.
So fled the light-shod moments, hour by hour,
While the grim husband clang'd upon his forge
In lurid caverns of the distant isle,

Unboding, and unheeded in his home,
Save with a scornful jest. Till now the crown
Of Artemis shone at her topmost height:
Then rose the impassion'd lovers, with rapt eyes
Fix'd each on each, and pass'd beyond the hall,
Thro' curtains of that chamber whence all winds
Of love flow ever toward the fourfold Earth;
At whose dim vestibule Alectryôn
Disposed him, mindful of his master's word;
But Erôs, heavy-eyed, long since had slept,
Deep-muffled in the softness of his plumes.
And all was silence in the House of Fire.

Only Alectryôn, thro' brazen bars,
Watch'd the blue East for Eôs, she whose torch
Should warn him of the coming of the Sun.
Even thus he kept his vigils: but, ere half
Her silvery downward path the Huntress knew,
His senses by that rich immortal food
Grew numb'd with languor. Then the shadowy hall's
Deep columns glimmer'd, interblent with dreams —
Thick forests, running waters, darkling caves
Of Thrace; and half in thought he grasp'd the bow;
Hunted once more within his native wilds,

Cheering the hounds; until before his eyes
The drapery of all nearer pictures fell,
And his limbs droop'd. Whereat the imp of Sleep,
Hypnos, who hid him at the outer gate,
Slid in with silken-sandall'd feet, and laid
A subtle finger on his lids. And so,
Crouch'd at the warder-post, Alectryôn slept.

Meanwhile the God and Goddess, recking naught
Of evil, trusting to the faithful boy,
Sank satiate in the calm of tranced rest.
And past the sleeping warder, deep within
The portals of that chamber whence all winds
Of love flow ever toward the fourfold Earth,
Hypnos kept on, walking, yet half afloat
In the sweet air; and, fluttering with cool wings
Above their couch, fann'd the reposeful pair
To slumber. Thus, a careless twilight hour,
Unknowing Eôs and her torch, they slept.

Ill-fated rest! Awake, ye fleet-wing'd Loves,
Your mistress! Eôs, rouse the sleeping God,
And warn him of the coming of the Day!
Alectryôn, wake! In vain: Eôs swept by,

Radiant, a blushing finger on her lips.
In vain! Close on her flight, from furthest East,
The peering Hêlios drove his lambent car,
Casting the tell-tale beams on earth and sky,
Until Olympos laugh'd within his light;
And all the House of Fire grew roof'd with gold;
And thro' its brazen windows Hêlios gazed
Upon the sleeping lovers: thence away
To Lemnos flash'd, across the rearward sea,
A messenger, from whom the vengeful smith,
Hêphæstos, learn'd the story of his wrongs;
Whence afterward rude scandal spread thro' Heaven.

But they, the lovers, startled from sweet sleep
By garish Day, stood timorous and mute,
Even as a regal pair, the hart and hind,
When first the keynote of the clarion horn
Pierces their covert, and the deep-mouth'd hound
Bays, following on the trail; then, with small pause
For amorous partings, sped in diverse ways.
She, Aphroditê, clothed in pearly cloud,
Dropt from Olympos to the eastern shore;
Thence floated, half in shame, half laughter-pleased,
Southward across the blue Ægæan sea,

That had a thousand little dimpling smiles
At her discomfort, and a thousand eyes
To shoot irreverent glances. But her conch
Pass'd the Eubœan coasts, and softly on
By rugged Dêlos, and the gentler slope
Of Naxos, to Icarian waves serene;
Thence sail'd betwixt fair Rhodos, on the left,
And windy Carpathos, until it touch'd
Cyprus; and soon the conscious Goddess found
Her bower in the hollow of the isle;
And wondering nymphs in their white arms received
Their white-arm'd mistress, bathing her fair limbs
In fragrant dews, twining her lucent hair
With roses, and with kisses soothing her;
Till, glowing in fresh loveliness, she sank
To stillness, tended in the sacred isle,
And hid herself awhile from all her peers.

But angry Arês faced the treacherous Morn,
Spurning the palace tower; nor look'd behind,
Disdainful of himself and secret joys
That stript him to the laughter of the Gods.
Toward the east he made, and overhung
The broad Thermaic gulf; then, shunning well

The crags of Lemnos, by Mount Athôs stay'd
A moment, mute; thence hurtled sheer away,
Across the murmuring Northern sea, whose waves
Are swoll'n in billows ruffled with the cuffs
Of endless winds; so reach'd the shores of Thrace,
And spleen pursued him in the tangled wilds.

Hither at eventide remorseful came
Alectryôn; but the indignant God,
With harsh revilings, changed him to the Cock,
That evermore, remembering his fault,
Heralds with warning voice the coming Day.

THE TEST.

SEVEN women loved him. When the wrinkled pall
Enwrapt him from their unfulfill'd desire,
(Death, pale triumphant rival, conquering all,)

They came, for that last look, around his pyre.
One strew'd white roses, on whose leaves were hung
Her tears, like dew; and in discreet attire

Warbled her tuneful sorrow. Next among
The group, a fair-hair'd virgin moved serenely,
Whose saintly heart no vain repinings wrung,

Reach'd the calm dust, and there, composed and queenly,
Gazed, but the missal trembled in her hand:
"That's with the past," she said, "nor may I meanly

Give way to tears!" and pass'd into the land.
The third hung feebly on the portals, moaning,
With whiten'd lips — and feet that stood in sand,

So weak they seem'd — and all her passion owning.
The fourth, a ripe, luxurious maiden, came,
Half for such homage to the dead atoning

By smiles on one who fann'd a later flame
In her slight soul, her fickle steps attended.
The fifth and sixth were sisters: at the same

Wild moment, both above the image bended,
And with immortal hatred each on each
Glared, and therewith her exultation blended,

To know the dead had 'scaped the other's reach!
Meanwhile, thro' all the words of anguish spoken,
One lowly form had given no sound of speech,

Thro' all the signs of woe, no sign nor token;
But when they came to bear him to his rest,
They found her beauty paled — her heart was broken:

And in the Silent Land his shade confest
That she, of all the seven, loved him best.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

ONCE more on the fallow hill-side, as of old, I lie at rest
For an hour, while the sunshine trembles thro' the walnut-tree to the west —
Shakes on the rocks and fragrant ferns, and the berry-bushes around;
And I watch, as of old, the cattle graze in the lower pasture-ground.

Of the Saxon months of blossom, when the merle and mavis sing,
And a dust of gold falls everywhere from the soft mid-summer's wing,
I only know from my poets, or from pictures that hither come,
Sweet with the smile of the hawthorn-hedge and the scent of the harvest-home.

But July in our own New England — I bask myself in its prime,
As one in the light of a face he loves, and has not seen for a time!
Again the perfect blue of the sky; the fresh green woods; the call
Of the crested jay; the tangled vines that cover the frost-thrown wall:

Sounds and shadows remembered well! the ground-bee's droning hum;
The distant musical tree-tops; the locust beating his drum;
And the ripen'd July warmth, that seems akin to a fire which stole,
Long summers since, thro' the thews of youth, to soften and harden my soul.

Here it was that I loved her — as only a stripling can,
Who doats on a girl that others know no mate for the future man;
It was well, perhaps, that at last my pride and honor outgrew her art,
That there came an hour, when from broken chains I fled — with a broken heart.

'Twas well: but the fire would still flash up in sharp,
heat-lightning gleams,
And ever at night the false, fair face shone into pas-
sionate dreams;
The false, fair form, thro' many a year, was somewhere
close at my side,
And crept, as by right, to my very arms and the place
of my patient bride.

Bride and vision have pass'd away, and I am again
alone:
Changed by years; not wiser, I think, but only differ-
ent grown:
Not so much nearer wisdom is a man than a boy, forsooth,
Though, in scorn of what has come and gone, he hates
the ways of his youth.

In seven years, I have heard it said, a soul shall change
its frame;
Atom for atom, the man shall be the same, yet not the
same;
The last of the ancient ichor shall pass away from his
veins,
And a new-born light shall fill the eyes whose earlier
lustre wanes.

In seven years, it is written, a man shall shift his mood;
Good shall seem what was evil, and evil the thing that was good;
Ye that welcome the coming and speed the parting guest,
Tell me, O winds of summer! am I not half-confest?

For along the tide of this mellow month new fancies guide my helm,
Another form has enter'd my heart as rightful queen of the realm;
From under their long black lashes new eyes — half-blue, half-gray —
Pierce thro' my soul, to drive the ghost of the old love quite away.

Shadow of years! at last it sinks in the sepulchre of the past:
A gentle image and fair to see, but was my passion so vast?
"For you," I said, "be you false or true, are ever life of my life!"
Was it myself or another who spoke, and ask'd her to be his wife?

For here, on the dear old hill-side, I lie at rest again,
And think with a quiet self-content of all the passion and pain,
Of the strong resolve and the after-strife — but the vistas round me seem
So little changed, that I hardly know if the past is not dream.

Can I have sailed, for seven years, far out in the open world;
Have tack'd and drifted here and there, by eddying currents whirl'd;
Have gain'd and lost, and found again; and now, for a respite, come
Once more to the happy scenes of old, and the haven I voyaged from?

Blended infinite murmurs of True Love's earliest song,
Where are you slumbering out of the heart that gave you echoes so long?
But chords that have ceased to vibrate the swell of an ancient strain,
May thrill with a soulful music when rightly touch'd again.

Rock and forest and meadow: landscape perfect and true!

O, if ourselves were tender and all unchangeful as you,

I should not now be dreaming of seven years that have been,

Nor bidding old love good-by forever, and letting the new love in!

ESTELLE.

"How came he mad ?" — HAMLET.

OF all the beautiful demons, who fasten on human hearts,
To fetter the bodies and souls of men with exquisite, mocking arts,
The cruellest, and subtlest, and fairest to mortal sight,
Is surely a woman called Estelle, who tortures me day and night.

The first time that I saw her, she pass'd with sweet lips mute,
As if in scorn of the vacant praise of those who kept her suit;
A hundred lustres flash'd and shone as she rustled thro' the crowd,
And a passion seized me for her there — so passionless and proud.

The second time that I saw her, she met me face to face:
Her bending beauty answer'd my bow in a tremulous moment's space;
With an upward glance that instantly fell she read me through and through,
And found in me something worth her while to idle with and subdue;

Something, I know not what: perhaps the spirit of eager youth,
That named her a queen of queens at once, and loved her in very truth;
That threw its pearl of pearls at her feet, and offer'd her, in a breath,
The costliest gift a man can give from his cradle to his death.

The third time that I saw her — this woman called Estelle —
She pass'd her milk-white arm thro' mine and dazzled me with her spell;
A blissful fever thrill'd my veins, and there, in the moonbeams white,
I yielded my soul to the fierce control of that maddening delight!

And at many a trysting afterwards she wove my heart-strings round
Her delicate fingers, twisting them, and chanting low as she wound;
The rune she sang rang sweet and clear like the chime of a witch's bell:
Its echo haunts me even now, with the word Estelle — Estelle!

Ah, then, as a dozen before me had, I lay at last at her feet,
And she turn'd me off with a calm surprise when her triumph was all complete:
It made me wild, the stroke which smiled so pitiless out of her eyes,
Like lightning fall'n, in clear noonday, from cloudless and bluest skies!

The whirlwind follow'd upon my brain and beat my thoughts to rack:
Who knows the many a month I lay ere memory floated back?
Even now, I tell you, I wonder whether this woman, called Estelle,

Is flesh and blood, or a beautiful lie, sent up from the depths of hell.

For at night she stands where the pallid moon streams into this grated cell,
And only gives me that mocking glance when I speak her name — *Estelle!*
With the old resistless longing often I strive to clasp her there,
But she vanishes from my open arms and hides I know not where.

And I hold that if she were human she could not fly like the wind,
But her heart would flutter against my own, in spite of her scornful mind:
Yet, oh! she is not a phantom, since devils are not so bad,
As to haunt and torture a man, long after their tricks have made him mad!

EDGED TOOLS.

WELL, Helen, quite two years have flown
Since that enchanted, dreamy night,
When you and I were left alone,
And wonder'd whether those were right
Who said that each the other loved;
And thus debating, yes and no,
And half in earnest, as it proved,
We bargain'd to pretend 'twere so.

Two skeptic children of the world,
Each with a heart engraven o'er
With broken love-knots, quaintly curl'd,
Of hot flirtations held before;
Yet, somehow, either seem'd to find,
This time, a something more akin
To that young natural love — the kind
Which comes but once, and breaks us in.

What sweetly stolen hours we knew,
And frolics perilous as gay!
Tho' lit in sport, Love's taper grew
More bright and burning day by day.
We knew each heart was only lent,
The other's ancient scars to heal:
The very thought a pathos blent
With all the mirth we tried to feel.

How bravely, when the time to part
Came with the wanton season's close,
Tho' nature with our mutual art
Had mingled more than either chose,
We smother'd Love, upon the verge
Of folly, in one last embrace,
And buried him without a dirge,
And turn'd, and left his resting-place.

Yet often, (tell me what it means,)
His spirit steals upon me here,
Far, far away from all the scenes
His little lifetime held so dear;
He comes: I hear a mystic strain
In which some tender memory lies;

I dally with your hair again ;
I catch the gleam of violet eyes.

Ah, Helen ! how have matters been
Since those rude obsequies, with you ?
Say, is my partner in the sin
A sharer of the penance too ?
Again the vision 's at my side :
I drop my head upon my breast,
And wonder if he really died,
And why his spirit will not rest.

THE SWALLOW.

HAD I, my love declared, the tireless wing
That wafts the swallow to her northern skies,
I would not, sheer within the rich surprise
Of full-blown Summer, like the swallow, fling
My coyer being; but would follow Spring,
Melodious consort, as she daily flies,
Apace with suns, that o'er new woodlands rise
Each morn — with rains her gentler stages bring.
My pinions should beat music with her own;
Her smiles and odors should delight me ever,
Gliding, with measured progress, from the zone
Where golden seas receive the mighty river,
Unto yon lichen'd cliffs, whose ridges sever
Our Norseland from the arctic surge's moan.

REFUGE IN NATURE.

WHEN the rude world's relentless war has press'd
Fiercely upon them, and the hot campaign
Closes with battles lost, some yield their lives,
Or linger in the ruins of the fight —
Unwise, and comprehending not their fate,
Nor gathering that affluent recompense
Which the all-pitying Earth has yet in store.
Surely such men have never known the love
Of Nature; nor had recourse to her fount
Of calm delights, whose influences heal
The wounded spirits of her vanquish'd sons;
Nor ever — in those fruitful earlier days,
Wherein her manifest forms do most enrich
Our senses void of subtler cognizance —
Wander'd in summer fields, climb'd the free hills,
Pursued the murmuring music of her streams,
And found the borders of her sounding sea.

But thou — when, in the multitudinous lists
Of traffic, all thine own is forfeited
At some wild hazard, or by weakening drains
Pour'd from thee ; or when, striving for the meed
Of place, thou failest, and the lesser man
By each ignoble method wins thy due ;
When the injustice of the social world
Environs thee ; when ruthless public scorn,
Black slander, and the meannesses of friends,
Have made the bustling practice of the world
To thee a discord and a mockery ;
Or even if that last extremest pang
Be thine, and, added to such other woes,
The loss of that forever faithful love
Which else had balanced all : the putting out,
Untimely, of the light in dearest eyes ; —
At such a time thou well may'st count the days
Evil, and for a season quit the field ;
Yet not surrendering all human hopes,
Nor the rich physical life which still remains
God's boon and thy sustainer. It were base
To join alliance with the hosts of Fate
Against thyself : crowning their victory
By loose despair, or seeking rest in death.

More wise, betake thee to those sylvan haunts
Thou knewest when young, and, once again a child,
Let their perennial loveliness renew
Thy natural faith and childhood's heart serene.
Forgetting all the toilsome pilgrimage,
Awake from strife and shame, as from a dream
Dream'd by a boy, when under waving trees
He sleeps and dreams a languid afternoon.
Once more from these harmonious beauties gain
Repose and ransom, and a power to feel
The immortal gladness of inanimate things.

There is the mighty Mother, ever young
And garlanded, and welcoming her sons.
There are her thousand charms to soothe thy pain,
And merge thy little, individual woe
In the broad health and happy fruitfulness
Of all that smiles around thee. For thy sake
The woven arches of her forests breathe
Perpetual anthems, and the blue skies smile
Between, to heal thee with their infinite hope.
There are her crystal waters; lave thy brows,
Hot with long turmoil, in their purity:
Wash off the battle-dust from those poor limbs

Blood-stain'd and weary. Holy sleep shall come
Upon thee ; waking, thou shalt find in bloom
The lilies, fresh as in the olden days ;
And once again, when Night unveils her stars,
Thou shalt have sight of their high radiance,
And feel the old, mysterious awe subdue
The phantoms of thy pain.

And from that height
A voice shall whisper of the faith, thro' which
A man may act his part until the end.
Anon thy ancient yearning for the fight
May come once more, temper'd by poise of chance,
And guided well with all experience.
Invisible hands may gird thy armor on,
And Nature put new weapons in thy hands,
Sending thee out to try the world again —
Perchance to conquer, being cased in mail
Of double memories : knowing smaller griefs
Can add no sorrow to the woful past ;
And that, howbeit thou mayest stand or fall,
Earth proffers men her refuge everywhere,
And Heaven's promise is for aye the same.

MONTAGU.

QUEEN Katherine of Arragon
In gray Kimbolton dwelt,
A joyous bride, ere bluff King Hal
To Anne's beauty knelt.

Still in her haughty Spanish eyes
Their childhood's lustre shone,
That lit with love two royal hearts,
And won the English throne.

From gray Kimbolton's castle-gate
She rode, each summer's day,
And blithely led the greenwood chase
With hawk and hound away.

And ever handsome Montagu,
Her Master of the Horse,
To guard his mistress kept her pace
O'er heather, turf, and gorse.

O, who so brave as Montagu
To leap the hedges clear!
And who so fleet as he to find
The coverts of the deer!

And who so wild as Montagu,
To seek his sovereign's love!
More hopeless than a child, who craves
The brightest star above.

Day after day her presence fed
The fever at his heart;
Yet loyally the young knight scorn'd
To play a traitor's part.

Only, when at her palfrey's side
He bow'd him by command,
Light'ning her footfall to the earth,
He press'd her dainty hand;

A tender touch, as light as love,
Soft as his heart's desire;
But aye, in Katherine's artless blood,
It woke no answering fire.

King Hal to gray Kimbolton came
Ere long, and true love's sign,
Unused in colder Arragon,
She pray'd him to divine:

"Canst tell me, Sire," she said, "what mean
The gentry of your land,
When softly, thus, and thus, they take
And press a lady's hand?"

"Ha! ha!" laugh'd Hal, "but tell me, Chick,
Each answering in course,
Do any press your hand?" "O, yes,
My Master of the Horse."

Off to the wars her gallant went,
And push'd the foremost dykes,
And gash'd his fair young form against
A score of Flemish pikes.

Heart's blood ebb'd fast; but Montagu,
Dipping a finger, wove
These red words in his shield: "Dear Queen,
I perish of your love!"

Kimbolton, after many a year,
Again met Katherine's view;
The banish'd wife, with half a sigh,
Remember'd Montagu.

WILD WINDS WHISTLE.

1.

SIR ULRIC a Southern dame has wed;
Wild winds whistle and snow is come;
He has brought her home to his bower and bed.
Hither and thither the birds fly home.

Her hair is darker than thick of night;
Wild winds whistle, &c.
Her hands are fair, and her step is light.
Hither and thither, &c.

From out his castel in the North,
Sir Ulric to hunt rode lightly forth.

Three things he left her for good or ill —
A bonny bird that should sing at will,

With carol sweeter than silver bell,
Day and night in the old castel;

A lithe little page to gather flowers;
And a crystal dial to mark the hours.

2.

Lady Margaret watch'd Sir Ulric speed
Away to the chase on his faithful steed.

From morning till night, the first day long,
She sat and listen'd the bonny bird's song.

The second day long, with fingers fair,
She curl'd and comb'd her page's hair.

The third day's sun rose up on high;
By the dial she was seated nigh:

She loathed the bird and the page's face,
And counted the shadow's creeping pace.

3.

The strange knight drew his bridle-rein;
He look'd at the sky and he look'd at the plain.

"O lady!" he said — "'twas a sin and shame
To leave for the chase so fair a dame."

"O lady!" he said — "we two will flee
To the blithesome land of Italie;

"There the orange grows, and the fruitful vine,
And a bower of myrtle shall be thine."

He has taken her hand and kiss'd her mouth:
Now Ho! sing Ho! for the sunny South.

He has kiss'd her mouth and clasp'd her waist:
Now, good gray steed, make haste: make haste!

4.

Sir Ulric back from the chase has come,
And sounds the horn at his castel-home.

Or ever he drew his bridle rein,
He saw the dial split in twain;

The bonny blithe bird was stark and dead,
And the lithe little page hung down his head.

The lithe little page hung down his head;
Wild winds whistle and snow is come;
"O where, Sir Page, has my lady fled?"
Hither and thither the birds fly home.

PETER STUYVESANT'S NEW YEAR'S CALL.

1 JAN. A. C. 1661.

WHERE nowadays the Battery lies,
New York had just begun,
A new-born babe, to rub its eyes,
In Sixteen Sixty-One.
They christen'd it Nieuw Amsterdam,
Those burghers grave and stately,
And so, with schnapps and smoke and psalm,
Lived out their lives sedately.

Two windmills topp'd their wooden wall,
On Stadthuys gazing down,
On fort, and cabbage-plots, and all
The quaintly-gabled town;
These flapp'd their wings and shifted backs,
As ancient scrolls determine,

To scare the savage Hackensacks,
Paumanks, and other vermin.

At night the loyal settlers lay
Betwixt their feather-beds;
In hose and breeches walk'd by day,
And smoked, and wagg'd their heads;
No changeful fashions came from France,
The vrouwleins to bewilder;
No broad-brimm'd burgher spent for pants
His every other guilder.

In petticoats of linsey-red,
And jackets neatly kept,
The vrouws their knitting-needles sped
And deftly spun and swept;
Few modern-school flirtations there
Set wheels of scandal trundling,
But youths and maidens did their share
Of staid, old-fashion'd bundling.

— The New Year opened clear and cold:
The snow, a Flemish ell

In depth, lay over Beeckman's Wold
And Wolfert's frozen well;
Each burgher shook his kitchen-doors,
Drew on his Holland leather,
Then stamp'd thro' drifts to do the chores,
Beshrewing all such weather.

But — after herring, ham, and kraut —
To all the gather'd town
The Dominie preach'd the morning out,
In Calvinistic gown;
While tough old Peter Stuyvesant
Sat pew'd in foremost station:
The potent, sage, and valiant
Third Governor of the nation.

Prayer over, at his mansion hall,
With cake and courtly smile,
He met the people, one and all,
In gubernatorial style;
Yet miss'd, though now the day was old,
An ancient fellow-feaster:
Heer Govert Loockermans, that bold
Brewer and burgomeester;

Who, in his farm-house, close without
The picket's eastern end,
Sat growling at the twinge of gout
That kept him from his friend.
But Peter strapp'd his wooden peg,
When tea and cake were ended,
(Meanwhile the sound remaining leg
Its high jack-boot defended,)

A woolsey cloak about him threw,
And swore, by wind and limb,
Since Govert kept from Peter's view,
Peter would visit him;
Then sallied forth, thro' snow and blast,
While many a humble greeter
Stood wondering whereaway so fast
Strode bluff Hardkoppig Pieter.

Past quay and cow-path, through a lane
Of vats and mounded tans,
He puff'd along, with might and main,
To Govert Loockermans;
Once there, his right of entry took,
And hail'd his ancient crony:

"Myn Gott! in dese Manhattoes, Loock,
Ve gets more snow as money!"

To which, till after whiffs profound,
The other answer'd not;
At last there came responsive sound:
"Yah, Peter: yah, Myn Gott!"
Then goedevrouw Marie sat her guest
Beneath the chimney-gable,
And courtesied, bustling at her best
To spread the New Year's table.

She brought the pure and genial schnapps,
That years before had come —
In the "Nieuw Nederlandts," perhaps —
To cheer the settlers' home;
The long-stemm'd pipes; the fragrant roll
Of press'd and crispy Spanish;
Then placed the earthen mugs and bowl,
Nor long delay'd to vanish.

Thereat, with cheery nod and wink,
And honors of the day,

The trader mix'd the Governor's drink
As evening sped away.
That ancient room! I see it now:
The carven nutwood dresser;
The drawers, that many a burgher's vrouw
Begrudged their rich possessor;

The brace of high-back'd, leathern chairs,
Brass-nail'd at every seam;
Six others, ranged in equal pairs;
The bacon hung abeam;
The chimney-front, with porcelain shelft;
The hearty wooden fire;
The picture, on the steaming delft,
Of David and Goliah.

I see the two old Dutchmen sit
Like Magog and his mate,
And hear them, when their pipes are lit,
Discuss affairs of state:
The clique that would their sway demean;
The pestilent importation
Of wooden nutmegs, from the lean
And losel Yankee nation.

But when the subtle juniper
Assumed its sure command,
They drank the buxom loves that were —
They drank the Motherland;
They drank the famous Swedish wars,
Stout Peter's special glory,
While Govert proudly show'd the scars
Of Indian contests gory.

Ere long, the berry's power awoke
Some music in their brains,
And, trumpet-like, through rolling smoke,
Rang long-forgotten strains:
Old Flemish snatches, full of blood,
Of phantom ships and battle;
And Peter, with his leg of wood,
Made floor and casement rattle.

Then round and round the dresser pranced,
The chairs began to wheel,
And on the board the punch-bowl danced
A Netherlandish reel;
Till midnight o'er the farmhouse spread
Her New-Year's skirts of sable,

And, inch by inch, each puzzled head
Dropt down upon the table.

But still to Peter, as he dream'd,
That table spread and turn'd;
The chimney-log blazed high, and seem'd
To circle as it burn'd;
The town into the vision grew
From ending to beginning;
Fort, wall, and windmill met his view,
All widening and spinning.

The cowpaths, leading to the docks,
Grew broader, whirling past,
And checker'd into shining blocks
A city fair and vast;
Stores, churches, mansions, overspread
The metamorphosed island,
While not a beaver show'd his head
From Swamp to Kalchhook highland.

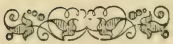
Eftsoons the picture pass'd away;
Hours after, Peter woke
To see a spectral streak of day

Gleam in thro' fading smoke;
Still slept old Govert, snoring on
In most melodious numbers;
No dreams of Eighteen Sixty-One
Commingled with his slumbers.

But Peter, from the farmhouse-door,
Gazed doubtfully around,
Rejoiced to find himself once more
On sure and solid ground.
The sky was somewhat dark ahead:
Wind East, and morning lowery;
But on he push'd, a two-miles' tread,
To breakfast at his Bouwery.

III.

TRANSLATION.



JEAN PROUVAIRE'S SONG AT THE BARRICADE.

"While the men were making cartridges and the women lint; while a large frying-pan, full of melted pewter and lead, destined for the bullet-mould, was smoking over a burning furnace; while the videttes were watching the barricades with arms in their hands; while Enjolras, whom nothing could distract, was watching the videttes; Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, a few others besides, sought each other and got together, as in the most peaceful days of their student-chats, and in a corner of this wine-shop changed into a casemate, within two steps of the redoubt which they had thrown up, their carbines primed and loaded resting on the backs of their chairs, these gallant young men, so near their last hour, began to sing love-rhymes. . . . . The hour, the place, these memories of youth recalled, the few stars which began to shine in the sky, the funereal repose of these deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable event, gave a pathetic charm to these rhymes, murmured in a low tone in the twilight by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a sweet poet." — LES MISERABLES: *Saint Denis*, Book XII. Chapter VI.

DO you remember our charming times,
When we were both at the age which knows,
Of all the pleasures of Paris, none
Like making love in one's Sunday clo'es;

When all your birthdays, added to mine,
A total of forty would not bring,
And when, in our humble and cosy roost,
All, even the Winter, to us was Spring?

Rare days! then prudish Manuel stalk'd,
Paris feasted each saintsday in;
Foy thunder'd away, and — ah, your waist
Prick'd me well with a truant pin!

Every one ogled you. At Prado's,
Where you and your briefless barrister dined,
You were so fair that the roses, I thought,
Turn'd to look at you from behind.

They seem'd to whisper: "How handsome she is!
What wavy tresses! what sweet perfume!
Under her mantle she hides her wings:
Her flower of a bonnet is just in bloom!"

I roam'd with you, pressing your dainty arm,
And the passers thought that Love, in play,
Had mated, in unison so sweet,
The gallant April with gentle May.

We lived so cosily, all by ourselves,
On love — that choice forbidden fruit,
And never a word my lips could speak
But your heart already had follow'd suit.

The Sarbonne was that bucolic place
Where night till day my passion throve;
'Tis thus that an ardent youngster makes
The Student's Quarter a Realm of Love.

O Place Maubert! O Place Dauphine!
Sky-parlor reaching heavenward far,
In whose depths, when you drew your stocking on,
I saw a twinkling morning-star.

Hard-learn'd Plato I've long forgot:
Neither Malebranche, nor Lamennais,
Could teach me such faith in Providence
As the flower which in your bosom lay.

You were my servant and I your slave:
O golden attic! O joy, to lace
Your corset; to watch you showing, at morn,
The ancient mirror your youthful face!

Ah! who indeed could ever forget
That sky and dawn commingling still;
That ribbony, flowery, gauzy glory,
And Love's sweet nonsense talked at will?

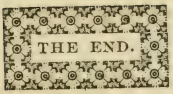
Our garden a pot of tulips was;
Your petticoat curtain'd the window-pane;
I took the earthen bowl of my pipe
And gave you a cup of porcelain.

What huge disasters to make us fun!
Your muff afire — your tippet lost:
And that cherish'd portrait of Shakspeare, sold,
One hungry evening, at half its cost.

I was a beggar and you were kind:
A kiss from your fair round arms I'd steal,
While the folio-Dante we gayly spread
With a hundred chestnuts, our frugal meal.

And oh! when first my favor'd mouth
A kiss to your burning lips had given,
You were dishevell'd and all aglow;
I, pale with rapture, believed in Heaven.

Do you remember our countless joys,
Those neckerchiefs rumpled every day?
Alas, what sighs from our boding hearts
The infinite skies have borne away!



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